

**First United Methodist Church of Freehold
Bulletin**

**Sunday, December 18, 2022
4th Sunday of Advent
LOVE**

Announcements: Sharon Shutzer

Prelude: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" 15th Century French

Welcome: Rev. Christina Zito

*Call to Worship:

Leader: Come, worship our God who communicates in many ways!

People: Creator, we are ready to listen.

Leader: God guides us through Scripture, dreams, and conscience.

People: Jesus, we are ready to listen.

Leader: As God spoke in ages past, God speaks still.

People: Spirit, we are ready to listen.

All: **God, as we attend to you, fill us with love. Amen.**

*Opening Prayer: (In Unison)

Caring One, in our doubts and fears you claim us as beloved. When life feels heavy, you meet us where we are. Lord, help us to be bearers of your love in the world by affirming the worth of others. Inspire us to trust in what is possible, dwelling in each of us. May love be our guide. Amen.

*Opening Hymn: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (v. 1-4) UMH #211

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath
The Candle of LOVE
Myra Pierce & Sandra Hernandez**

*Praise Hymn: "People Look East" (v. 1, 3, 4) UMH #202

Prayer Hymn: "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" TFWS #2193

Pastoral Prayer: Rev. Christina Zito

[For those joining us online, please submit your prayer requests in the comments on the virtual attendance sheet, or email the church office. Your prayer requests will be lifted up in next Sunday's service.]

The Lord's Prayer: UMH #895

Nativity Story

Scripture Reading: Matthew 1:18-25 Jane Heaton

Sermon: "Dreams Can Change the World" Rev. Christina Zito

Offering: Today's **Special Offering** will continue benefit Local Charities: Open Door, Habitat for Humanity and the Emergency Housing and Advocacy Program (E.H.A.P.).

Offertory: "By Faith"
FUMC Choir From Season of Joy

*Doxology: "Welcome Child" Mitch Samu

*Offertory Prayer: (In Unison)
O God of Love, we offer you our tithes and gifts in response to your love and grace. We pray your blessing upon these gifts as well as our efforts to serve you and your children with boundless love. Please grant us your blessing and grow what we give so that your kingdom on earth may be fulfilled through your love. We pray all this in the name of Jesus who taught us to love. Amen.

*Passing of the Peace

*Closing Hymn: "Love Came Down at Christmas" UMH #242

*Benediction: Rev. Christina Zito

*Postlude

Scripture Passage for Sunday, December 18, 2022 Liturgist: Jane Heaton

Matthew 1:18-25 (New Revised Standard Version)

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah^[a] took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son,^[b] and he named him Jesus.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Opening Hymn:
"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"
UMH #211

(Verse 1)

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

(Chorus)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

(Verse 2)

O come Thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show
And cause us in her ways to go.

(Chorus)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

(Verse 3)

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times once gave the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.

(Chorus)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

(Verse 4)

O come, Thou Root of Jesse's tree,
An ensign of thy people be;
before Thee rulers silent fall;
All peoples on Thy mercy call.

(Chorus)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Praise Hymn:
"People Look East"
(v. 1, 3, 4)
UMH #202

(Verse 1)

People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Guest, is on the way.

(Verse 3)

Stars, keep watch. When night is dim,
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Star, is on the way.

(Verse 4)

Angels announce with shouts of mirth
Him who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
With the word, the lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Prayer Hymn:
"Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying"
TFWS #2193

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
Send us love, send us power,
Send us grace.

**Offertory:
“By Faith”
From: Season of Joy**

By faith we see the hand of God
In the light of creation’s design,
In the lives of those who prove His faithfulness,
Who walk by faith and not by sight.

By faith our fathers roamed the earth
With the pow’r of His promise in their hearts,
Of a holy city built by God’s own hand,
A place where peace and justice reign.

We will stand as children of the promise;
We will fix our eyes on Him, our soul’s reward.
‘Til the race is finished and the work is done,
We’ll walk by faith and not by sight.

By faith the prophets saw the day
When the longed-for Messiah would appear
With the pow’r to break the chains of sin and death
And rise triumphant from the grave.

By faith the church was called to go
(By faith the church was called to go)
In the pow’r of the Spirit to the lost
(In the pow’r of the Spirit to the lost)
To deliver captives and to preach good news
In every corner of the earth.

We will stand as children of the promise;
We will fix our eyes on Him, our soul’s reward.
‘Til the race is finished and the work is done,
We’ll walk by faith and not by sight.

We walk by faith.
(We walk by faith and not by sight,)
By faith this mountain shall be moved
And the pow’r of the gospel shall prevail,
For we know in Christ all things are possible
For all who call upon His name.

We will stand as children of the promise;
We will fix our eyes on Him, our soul’s reward.
‘Til the race is finished and the work is done,
We’ll walk by faith and not by sight.

Oh, we will stand as children of the promise;
We will fix our eyes on Him, our soul’s reward.
‘Til the race is finished and the work is done,
We’ll walk by faith and not by sight.

We’ll walk by faith and not by sight.
We’ll walk by faith and not by sight.

**Doxology:
“Welcome Child”
Mitch Samu**

Welcome Babe.
Hello Child.
Greetings King
To one so small and mild.

Kings will praise.
Angels sing.
We rejoice
Forever we will love you all we can.
Amen!

**Closing Hymn:
“Love Came Down at Christmas”
UMH #242**

(Verse 1)
Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas;
Star and angels gave the sign.

(Verse 2)
Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, Love divine;
Worship we our Jesus,
But wherewith for sacred sign?

(Verse 3)
Love shall be our token;
Love be yours and love be mine;
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

Announcements

December 18, 2022

Welcome to worship at First United Methodist Church of Freehold. Whether you are joining us in person or virtually, we are glad you are with us.

The beautiful **Poinsettias** gracing our altar have been donated by those listed in the bulletin.

Our **prayer chain** has been a longstanding, powerful part of our church and we are making sure we keep it going. If you would like to be a part of the prayer chain, please fill out the form provided in your bulletin and place it in the offering plate, or return it to the church office. An online form can also be found in the Newsletter.

Today is the last day to donate for **staff gifts**. Please give your donations to Melanie Bowen, or place them in the offering plate marked "Staff Gifts". Thank you for your support of our staff.

If you plan to fulfill your **2022 pledge**, please mail your contributions to the church office (Attention: Financial Secretary), or place your contribution in the offering plate during church services, or complete it through our online giving prior to Wednesday, December 28, 2022. A final bank deposit of cash/checks will be made the next day and the end-of-year contribution statements will be completed. Any money received after the December 28th date will be credited for the new year, 2023.

Also, please return your "**Estimate of Giving**" card for 2023. Extra cards are available at the back of the sanctuary or by contacting the church office. Completed cards can be returned in the offering plate or at the church office, in person or by mail.

Stop by the Elizabeth Circle "**Cookie Tray Sale**" following service today for the most delicious cookies to serve at your holiday table, then, visit **Allein's Craft Corner** for Christmas craft gifts and chocolates. All proceeds for these sales are donated to our church.

Join us for our Christmas Eve! We will have 2 services – 4:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

We will have an online only service on Christmas Day beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Join us in Fellowship Hall following service today for refreshments and fellowship time.

Grocery Cards for Acme, ShopRite and Stop & Shop will be sold during Fellowship Time.